A

PARTICULAR and AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE

OF THE

Life, Examination, Tortures and Execution

OF

ROBERT FRANCIS DAMIEN,

WHO

Attempted to kill *LEWIS* XV. King of *France*,

BY

Stabbing him in the Right Side, as he was ſtepping into his Coach, *January* the 5th, 1757.

INTERSPERSED WITH

Some occaſional Reflections on the dreadful Effects of *Enthuſiaſm* and *Superſtition*.

As publiſhed by Authority in Paris.

Tranſlated from the *French*

By *THOMAS JONES*, Eſq;

A PARIS.

Chez T. Le Grand, vis-a-vis La Bourſe.

LONDON: Reprinted for J. REASON, oppoſite *Serjeant's Inn, Fleetſtreet.*

M.DCC.LVII.

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A

LETTER

FROM A

GENTLEMAN in *PARIS*,

TO HIS

FRIEND in *LONDON*.

Dear Brother,

YOURS of the 20th of *January* 1757, I received very ſafe, and am greatly rejoiced at your ſurpriſing ſucceſs in *England*: were it not for my family, which is continually increaſing, I ſhould be for treading in your ſteps, and leave *France* myſelf, to accept of a voluntary baniſhment in *England*; but that is now impracticable.

You ſay *England* is as much preferable to *France*, as *Heaven* is to *Earth*; in that I think you are a little too romantic; but they certainly enjoy many priviledges and bleſſings which we are totally deprived of; but theſe things it were needleſs to enumerate upon, you being as well acquainted with them as myſelf.

You deſired, that I would write you a particular account of the proceedings againſt that villainous aſſaſſin *Damien*, for attempting the *life of our preſent majeſty*; and as your deſires, with me, have always the force of commands, I hereby tranſmit an authentic account, as publiſhed, by authority, in *Paris*.

An account of Robert Francis Damien, *who attempted to ſtab* Lewis XV. *as he was ſtepping into his coach on the 5th of* January, 1757.

THE dreadful effects of enthuſiaſm have been ſeverely felt in every age and country, in which they have exiſted. When once the overheated imagination of a pious madman has repreſented to him ſplendid ideas of the moſt atrocious enterprize; in order to ſerve the cauſe which his pious frency has embraced, it is no wonder if, in the ferment of his brain, he deſpiſes all pain and peril, and thinks it glo-

glorious to die in excruciating tortures, even though he ſhould fail in the execution of the horrid deed. The attempt he thinks ſufficiently glorious, though not crowned with ſucceſs.

Of all ſorts of madneſs this appears to be the worſt: for, whereas the generality of madmen reaſon right from wrong principles; theſe people are for the moſt part wrong both in their fundamentals and in their deductions from them, repreſenting murder, gun-powder-plots, &c. as innocent under the maſque of religion and pious zeal. Hence the enterprize of the fryar, who murdered *Henry* the third of *France*; hence *Ravaillac* ſtabbed *Henry* the fourth, and hence another aſſaſſin has made an execrable attempt upon *Lewis* the XVth.

The name of this enthuſiaſtical aſſaſſin is *Robert Francis Damien*, born in St. *Catherine's* ſuburb in the city of *Arras*; he is 42 years of age, and about five feet ſeven inches high. He had lived in the ſervice of ſeveral families, but was turned of by all of them with the character of a looſe profligate. His occupation of late has been to ſell balls to take ſpots out of cloaths; and yet from this mean and contemptible ſtation in life hath this lunatic dared to walk forth, and attempt to deprive a whole nation of their ſovereign's life.

He was a very ſuperſtitious enthuſiaſtical ſort of a man, and therefore a very proper tool or cat's-paw for the Romiſh prieſts to work upon. What horrid crimes are committed under the ſanction of religion! The artful popiſh clergy had worked him up to ſuch a pitch of enthuſiam; that, ſaint-like, he was proud to die in ſo glorious a cauſe, imagining his meritorious ſufferings would certainly proccure him a reſidence in heaven.

The French king, who had been for two days at *Triannon*, went from thence to *Verſailles* on the 5th of January laſt, to ſee the royal family, and was about to return at three quarters after five the ſame evening. He came from his cloſet by the ſtairs which come down upon the marble court (on the left hand as you look towards *Paris*) his coach waited for him at the ſteps which are at the end of the court, the aſſaſſin ſtood cloſe to the gate with his hat on, and was dreſt in a brown coat with a great coat over it.

The king was ſupported by the count *de Brionne* and the maſter of the horſe, who were leading him to his coach; a page of the bed-chamber walked before him with lights; the dauphin was behind him along with the duke *d'Ayen*, captain of the guards in waiting, and ſeveral exempts and equerries follow-

followed. A footman, named *Selim*, near whom the aſſaſſin ſtood, ſeeing the king approach, ſaid to the villain, *why don't you take off your hat, don't you ſee the king?* While he was ſaying this, the monſter ſtruck the king with a knife, which had two blades of different ſizes; with one of theſe blades he wounded the king between the fourth and fifth rib, but the ſtroke glanced to the right ſide, and moſt fortunately did not reach the bowels. The king, who at firſt had ſcarce felt any thing, then turning to the footman who had juſt bid the fellow take off his hat, ſaid, looking at the aſſaſſin, *that man has given me a terrible blow*; and clapping his hand to the place where he had been ſtruck, and feeling it warm, he drew back his hand all bloody, and ſaid, *I am wounded, ſeize him, but do not hurt him.*

This was certainly a very remarkable inſtance of calmneſs and preſence of mind. His majeſty was immediately carried to an apartment. Upon examining the wound, it was not thought dangerous. About a quarter paſt ſix his majeſty was blooded, and the ſame operation was repeated four hours after, for greater ſecurity. His majeſty ſlept but little that night, but was tolerably quiet.

How unſtable and inſecure muſt all human grandeur have appeared to the king in theſe hours

hours of reflection: and how buſy muſt memory have been to try if ſhe could recollect one act that could provoke ſuch an atrocious deed.

Whatever may be the ſallies of this monarch's private life, he certainly has publick virtue, and therefore his mind muſt ſoon have reſted in a conviction that he did not deſerve an aſſault upon his life.

The next morning a gentle ſweat ſucceeded an hour's ſleep. The ſurgeon's bandages being taken off, the tumor was abated, and all ſymptoms indicated that the knife had not penetrated the ſtomach. It was however, at firſt apprehended, that the inſtrument might be poiſoned, but the villain himſelf aſſured the contrary, and ſeveral experiments immediately made on dogs and other animals confirmed the truth of his declaration.

Certainly there appears ſomewhat providential in the eſcape the king had from this treaſonable deſign. It happened, that on that day, beſides his uſual cloathing, he put on a ſurtout of thick velvet, which no doubt greatly obſtructed the blow, and hindred the wound from proving mortal.

The Hoſt was expoſed to public view in all the churches of *Verſailles*, and orders were immediately

mediately ſent to the archbiſhop of *Paris* to put up public prayers for his majeſty's recovery; which was accordingly done, and the theatres and all public diverſions were ſhut up.

The execrable aſſaſſin, after ſtriking this horrid blow, never ſtirred from the place, and the duke *d'Ayen* having aſked which was the man, the fellow anſwered with the countenance of a *Ravaillac*. 'Tis I (*Foutre c'eſt moi en vérité*) He was ſeized and led to the guard-room, which ſtands at the gate from whence he had juſt come out. There he was ſtripped to his ſhirt, and there were found about him the knife, a New Teſtament, ſome images, and between thirty and thirty-five *Louis d'Ors*.

Immediately after this diſaſter, the dauphin, who was charged with the adminiſtration of the kingdom, and preſided in council during his majeſty's illneſs, wrote to the firſt preſident of the parliament; who immediately repaired to *Verſailles*, with ſeveral other preſidents and counſellors. The next day all the preſidents and counſellors of the parliament, as well thoſe who had reſigned, as thoſe of the two ſuppreſſed chambers, aſſembled and deliberated on this alarming event: the upſhot of this deliberation was in the evening carried to *Verſailles*.

The

The trial of the villain was agreed to be committed to the parliament; and the people in general began to rid themſelves of their anxiety, when it was reported abroad, that the ſtab was no more than a common wound, and that his majeſty wanted but a few days to recover his ſtrength, which was ſomewhat reduced by being bled ſo plentifully after the wound was given.

Damien appears very reſolute; his feet have been ſcorched, and the calf of his leg pinched with red hot tongs. He ſhrieked indeed, but confeſſed nothing. He was afterwards carried to priſon, and chained in a dungeon, and guards ſet over him.

He was aſked if he had any accomplices, and anſwered he had, but was ſure they had eſcaped before this time, but that great care ought to be taken of the dauphin, otherwiſe the like accident might, perhaps, befal him ſoon. When he was urged to diſcover more, he anſwered, he would ſpeak when it was time; that he was very ſenſible he deſerved death, and begged it might be haſtened.

The wife and daughter of *Damien* were ſent to the *Baſtile*, in hopes that ſome diſcoveries would be made. Nothing however of con-

conſequence has come to light from them; though they freely told all they knew of the abominable life and converſation of this monſter.

It is reported that there was great commotions in *Paris*; that ſeveral religious houſes were ſhut up, to prevent cabals among the clergy, and that the archbiſhop of *Paris* was publickly accuſed of being at the bottom of this atrocious deſign; but theſe givings out have ſince totally vaniſhed for want of any kind of confirmation.

His majeſty was not ill for any conſiderable length of time: it appears that on the 14th of the ſame month the wound, which he had received on the 5th, was quite healed, and his health reſtored, inſomuch that he aſſumed the reins of government, which had been entruſted to the dauphin; whoſe conduct, during his ſhort adminiſtration, gave ſuch ſatisfaction to the king, that he ordered he ſhould for the future attend at all the councils of ſtate.

Deputations from all the different parliaments went daily to his majeſty, particularly from *Rennes* and *Rouen*. The firſt were received very graciouſly, and the latter were told,

that their addreſs was a mark of their ſubmiſſion and reſpect.

On the 18th of *January*, *Damien* was carried from *Verſailles* to *Paris*, in a coach, under a ſtrong guard of 400 of the *French* and *Swiſs* guards. He arrived in *Paris* about three in the morning: orders were previouſly iſſued that no perſon ſhould ſtand on the road, or look out at the doors or windows, to ſee him paſs, on pain of being fired at by the guards. The villain kept up a kind of deſperate courage, or rather ferocity.

But before he parted from *Verſailles* he begged to ſpeak with the king and the dauphin, in hopes that notwithſtanding the heinouſneſs of his crime he might ſtill obtain mercy from his majeſty's known good nature and lenity. He was much ſurprized when they put him into a vehicle in order to convey him to the *Conciergerie*. He ſaid he had many things to reveal, but was told he muſt diſcover them to his judges.

Moſt of his declarations were conſidered as mere inventions to ſoften the rigour of the law; notwithſtanding which there were at leaſt ſixty perſons committed to goal on his account.

As

As ſoon as he was chained to his bed in the *Conciergerie*, ſome ſupper was offered him; he ſaid that he was not hungry but; he drank very plentifully. The firſt preſident of the parliament, ſtaid with him on the 19th from morning to evening, and even eat his dinner in the ſame room, and afterwards he waited on his majeſty at *Verſailles*, to communicate to him the queſtions already put to the criminal, and his anſwers to them, which were as follows:

Q. Do you promiſe before God to anſwer truly to the queſtions which ſhall be put to you?

A. Yes, ſir. [*Here he took the oath required.*]

Q. *Quelle age avez vous?* What age are you?

A. I am between 42 and 43 years old.

Q. What is your name?

A. I have the honour and pleaſure to inform you that my name is *Robert Francis Damien.*

Q. From whence came you?

A. I came from *Arras*, and was born in St. *Catherine*'s ſuburb there.

 Q. What

Q. What is your buſineſs or occupation?

A. My condition is that of a ſervant.

Q. What is your father's chriſtian name?

A. My father's name is *Joſeph Damien*, he is about 84 years of age; he is a carrier at *Arras*.

Q. Is your mother living?

A. No, ſhe is dead.

Q. Have you any brothers or ſiſters?

A. Yes, I have a brother whoſe name is *Lewis*? and I have a ſiſter, who is a joiner's widow.

Q. Are you married?

A. Yes, I married in the year 1738 to *Elizabeth Molegien*, a native of *Mentz*, *in Lorrain*, by whom I have a daughter aged about nineteen. When we were married, my wife lived with the marchioneſs *de Cruſol*, at the cloiſter of St. *Stephen de Greys*.

Q. Did

Q. Did your wife and daughter know what you did at *Paris*? and in whose ſervice you was? or did you conceal this from them?

A. I have been a ſervant to monſ. *de Hart*, counſellor in the parliament; and of the abbe *de Bauville*, who was very well pleaſed with me; ſo was madam *de la Bourdonage*, with whom I lived when her huſband died, having been recommended to her by the rector of the jeſuits of the college of *Louis le Grand*. I had been a domeſtic to thoſe fathers.

Q. Have not you lived with Mr. *Michel*, a foreign bookſeller? you ſay nothing of the 200 *Louis d'Ors* which you ſtole from him four days after he had hired you? nor that you run away from him, and got to *Arras*, and have ſtrolled about ſince at *Dunkirk*, *St. Omer*, *Bruſſels*, and other places?

A. I did indeed live with Mr. *Michel* of St. *Peterſburg*; I have not robbed him; the money was my own, ſaved out of my wages. I have been in the places you mention, to ſee my father and my relations, and to take care of my affairs.

Q. From what country did you come the 31ſt of *December*? and where did you lie that night?

A. I

A. I came from *Bruſſels* by the coach, I lay with my wife that night and the two following: my wife was cook at madam *Rihadel*'s.

By what we can learn of *Damien* day after day, he was conſtantly fluctuating between libertiniſm and fanaticiſm, which took poſſeſſion of him by turns. He was ſometimes ſunk in the depth of the moſt unfeeling abandoned wickedneſs, and at other times he was tranſported with the warmeſt extacies of devotional enthuſiaſm. In a fit of deſpair, it is ſaid, he has lately endeavoured to bite off the end of his tongue, and that his teeth have been pulled out to prevent a repetition of that attempt.

He was afterwards urged to confeſs the motives, *&c.* of his crime, he anſwered he would do it at a proper time, and deſired a delay of a day or two; this they refuſed, and began to torture him again; he then ſaid to the perſons who directed the torture, "*Gentlemen, Since you take this method to extort the truth from me, be aſſured, that, from this moment, I will never open my lips to confeſs any thing though you ſhould pull me limb from limb; or, though I ſhould live till the laſt piece of fleſh is torn from my bones.*" And he has adhered firmly to this reſolution ever ſince.

Since

Since this aſſaſſin's commitment, ſhoals of ſeditious papers and verſes, in print and manuſcript have been diſperſed throughout *Paris*. One or other of them has been ſtuck up in almoſt every public place. Even the convents have not been ſpared, and the Jeſuits were particularly aimed at. The following words in large characters were ſtuck on the gates of their colleges;

Neighbours remove if you would avoid being burnt.

Since which the fathers of that order applied for a guard, eſpecially in the night time, which was granted.

The art of torturing is now arrived to a very refined ſpecies of cruelty: leſt this wretch ſhould have taken poiſon, an emetic was inſtantly given him; and every artifice that could both prolong his life, and at the ſame time give him the moſt exquiſite pain was ſtudied by the phyſicians.

Thus did this abominable madman remain to be excruciated in every manner human wit can deviſe, and went through the whole with firmneſs. We have already known it is the genius of fanaticiſm to endure torments with pride and exultation. Upon the whole, the villain could not ſuffer too much for ſo horrible

horrible a crime, which was out-done by *Oliver Cromwell* only, who endeavoured to give his aſſaſſination the ſanction of national authority, and to cloath his abominable murder with the robes of equity and juſtice; but thoſe robes have been ſince torn off by the legiſlature; his guilt appears in its native deformity, and, unleſs what we are told of the deſcendants of his troopers and drummers in a neighbouring kingdom be true, his memory, in ſpite of ſome exalted qualities, is now deteſted by the good and ſenſible part of mankind.

The inciſions that he had received during his tortures, began at length to mortify; and it being thought, by the ſurgeons that attended him, that he could not exiſt much longer, he was carried forth to be executed according to his ſentence, which was, that he ſhould be dragged in a tumbril to the gate of the principal church, with a lighted torch in his hand, and there to declare he had committed a moſt abominable crime: from thence that he ſhould be dragged to the place of execution, and on a ſcaffold have his fleſh torn off with red hot pincers from his breaſt, arms, legs, and thighs; then that melted lead, boiling oil, and ſcalding pitch ſhould be poured on him; his hand, wherewith he attempted to do the murder, to be firſt burnt with flaming brimſtone: after

ter

after this to be torn in pieces by four horſes, his limbs and body burnt to aſhes and diſperſed in the air.

All this was executed amidſt the ſhouts and acclamations of the populace; whoſe impatience was ſuch that they at length broke in upon the executioner, who did not make the horſes tear him aſunder as faſt as they wanted, with ſwords, ſticks, knives, and other weapons, they fell upon him, dragged his limbs away, and burnt them in different parts of the city.

The houſe in which he was born was ordered to be burnt to the ground (the owner being firſt ſatisfied for it) and no other building will be ſuffered to be erected in the place; thus fell this aſſaſſin, after enduring the moſt excruciating tortures, ſhocking in themſelves to human nature, but yet not too much for ſo deſperate and horrible an attempt.

Of all ſorts of madneſs, a religious delirium is that which, in my opinion, calls for the moſt pity. When the impulſes of ambition or avarice, or the whims of pride and vanity, divorce a man from his underſtanding, our contempt is apt to mar our compaſſion, and we are inclinable to think *Bedlam* is a proper portion for him; or if he would rather, a *proper palace*.

But a poor creature that breaks his brains by ſtraining for extacy, and catches diſtraction while he leaps at inſpiration, is a genuine object of our humanity and concern. Such a man's imagination is a hell to him, as well as a paradiſe, and his tortures are as violent as his raptures at different moments.

It cannot therefore be an unacceptable office to prevent the ſpreading of this moping malady, by ſhewing its deformity; in order to which, I will preſent my reader with an account of a brace of *French* Prophets, as they are uſually called, who were the living monuments of enthuſiaſm, which led them a dance from *London* to the Downs near *Saliſbury*, there to worſhip, as they ſaid, by the appointment of the ſpirit, for the ſpace of ſeven days, and ſo many nights.

Their Proviſions conſiſted of biſket, honey, raiſins, and ſome ſtrong waters. With this deſign and this provender, they betook themſelves to prayer and the deſart.

While they were in it, they were daily viſited from all quarters, and continually ſurrounded with flocks of gazers and of ſheep. Some went for information, and ſome for mirth; but it was a dull and ignorant ſpirit, and

gave

gave neither ſatisfaction to the inquiſitive, nor diverſion to the merry.

Only one of the brethren was inſpired; the other had not then had any impulſe though, by his own confeſſion, he had gaped and prayed ſeven years for the ſpirit, and ſerved a long apprenticeſhip to *the art of trembling*. But he waited with great faith and patience for the happy hour (as the midwives call it) of being delivered of a revelation or two. In the mean time, he profeſſed himſelf much edified to ſee *the preacher* ſhake his ears, make wry faces, and utter oracles. And the *preacher*, on his part declared, that he felt wondrous joys and raptures, which he ſaid, no body elſe could feel, in theſe his holy ſhiverings, when the ſpirit took him by the throat, and ſhook his bones, and toſſed him, as it were, in a blanket.

If you aſked him the drift and meaning of this new ſect, he anſwered, *All men have corrupted their ways*. When it was demanded of him, why he called what he uttered by the name of *prophecy*? ſays he, *They are words of the ſpirit*. If you enquired how he knew he was inſpired, he replied, *The young men ſhall ſee viſions and the old men ſhall dream dreams*, and to prove it, quoted chapter and verſe.

This wretched recital of ſcripture, and worſe application, was all the reply that could be drawn from him. If you wanted a rational ſcheme of his principles, he was your humble ſervant, his divinity ſcorned the aid of ſenſe and reaſon. He was ſure he was in the right, and to convince you of it, would produce a text that perhaps called him a liar.

When princes and ſtates fall a diſputing, they argue from the mouths of their great guns, and ſilence their antagoniſts with a ſyllogiſm or two of gun-powder. And thus our prophet ſtopped your mouth, by ramming the ſpirit down your throat, and knocked you down with a volley of ſcripture.

Some made it a queſtion whether theſe godly ſtrollers played the madmen with deſign, or were only the ſlaves of deluſion. Their frantick actions, and wild reaſonings, argued their brains to be out of joint; but their denouncing ſo many woes againſt their country, ſeemed to infer that there was ſome roguery mixed with their madneſs. However it be, it is our comfort that Almighty anger is not obliged to turn lacquey, and be at the call of *enthuſiaſts* and *ſplenetick*s.

Whatever was their aim, the poor devils acted as if they had been very much in earneſt.

They

They had little cloaths, and no favour at all from the weather, which was very cold and rainy. At nights, indeed, by the permiſſion of the ſpirit and a farmer, they had the ſhelter of a barn; but ſtill they wanted fire and a bed.

The ſeverity of the air had ſo withered and bewitched their countenances, that they looked more like inhabitants of the *lower world*, than meſſengers of the *upper*. Never were there truer pictures of ſtupidity, hunger, and mortality. I dare ſay, would they own the truth, they were heart-ſick of cold, weather, and worſhip.

They both came from *London*; the dumb prophet is a porter, and the ſpeaker a taylor. This ninth part of a prophet went towards *Bath*, reſolving to labour on cloth and canvas, until the ſpirit gave him the other ſummons, and found him a new job of journey-work, whether his familiar has been ſince with him, or his holy ague returned upon him, I cannot ſay.

Who does not ſee in this account, the miſery of the man who has enthuſiaſm for his maſter?

Vain

Vain man, as if too little cares were given
On Earth, draws down diſquietudes from Heaven. Flatman.

But not to inſiſt on the agonies and vaſſalage it leads one into, it brings deſtruction and deformity on the two moſt beautiful and moſt valuable things in the world, *religion and human underſtanding*: It loſes or confounds the idea of God Almighty, by rendering him either monſtrouſly terrible, or meanly familiar; and makes the worſhip of him equally unlike and inconſiſtent, by placing it either in painful diſtortions of the mind, or in a blaſphemous intimacy, in talking to him, and expoſtulating with him; as if a miſerable mortal were to be the companion and counſellor of the Omnipotent.

And though a reaſonable mind is next to God, the greateſt good of a human creature, it is, in the caſe before us, utterly uſeleſs and contemptible; its room is filled, and its office ſupplied by ſpiritual fancies and chimerical inſpiration; and, in the eye of enthuſiaſm, a man is never a good chriſtian 'till he ceaſes to be a reaſonable creature.

I take it to be a very great truth, that, as the Almighty certainly gave us our underſtanding for ſome end, we cannot make a better uſe

of

of it, than about things which are ſpiritual and eternal. Methinks there is ſomething of *Logic* in it, that the *nobleſt endowment* ſhould be employed about the *nobleſt objects*. As all religion implies a choice, there can be none where reaſon is not conſulted; and I take it for granted, there is a concurrence of the faculties in the operation of the ſpirits upon our ſouls.

Let this ſerve to ſhew, that religion and reaſon are, and ought to be, good friends; but that enthuſiaſm is an enemy to both. *A mad man may mean well, but a rational man acts better*; and therefore *the affection of the heart ſhould follow the conviction of the underſtanding*. Fancy, compared with judgment, is a light and deſpicable thing.

It is ſcarce credible how far the deluſions of a man's mind will carry himſelf and others, eſpecially in the buſineſs of prophecy and things inviſible. There is no remedy from reaſon in this caſe, or uſe of it. A perſon who pretends to have the ſpirit, is above all your arguments, which are human and fallible; and your being blind to his inſpiration, before you can be convinced, muſt be inſpired too: and this is a ſort of evidence, which, perhaps, he cannot very readily help you to.

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Let this ſerve for a preface to the life of one *William Hacket*, a ſtrange Enthuſiaſt in queen *Elizabeth*'s time. I have taken it from Monſieur *Bayle*, but I ſhall write it in my own way.

The firſt thing we hear of *Hacket* is, that being a ſervant to a gentleman, he, to revenge his maſter for ſome offence done him, bit off a ſchoolmaſter's noſe, and eat it up, that the other might not ſew it on again. His next exploit was the marrying of a wealthy widow, and then undoing her by his luxurious living. The fellow had no learning, but a great memory; this laſt enabled him to get by heart a great many ſermons, with which he uſed to make himſelf merry over his liquor. He was a ravenous lover of wine and women, and alſo a highwayman. Thus accompliſhed, he ſet up for a prophet, and told ill-tidings to come: famine, war, and peſtilence were threatened againſt *England*.——Nay, they were to aſſault in a body that very year in which he foretold them. I muſt not conceal that the man was ſo much a proteſtant, as to declare there would be no more Popes; and, indeed, if his other prophecy had come to paſs, there would have been no occaſion for them.

But neither his prediction of theſe evils, nor of this good news, could ſecure his prophe-

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tic hide from the magiſtrates birch; for at *Lincoln* he was publickly ſcourged for the petty lareeny of foreſeeing things which never came to paſs.

Hacket had ſuch aſſurance in the force of his own prayers, that he declared if all *England* prayed for rain, and he himſelf againſt it, there ſhould be dry weather. *Thou haſt the power*, (ſays he to his Maker) *and I have the faith, therefore the thing ſhall be done.* In theſe his prayers he uſed terrible imprecations upon himſelf and his own ſoul, and pretended that the effect of them was certain: in his diſpute with an adverſary, he would propoſe this condition; *I ſubmit inſtantly to everlaſting damnation, if I am not in the right; do you ſo too, and one of us ſhall change his religion, according to the miſerable or happy ſucceſs of our imprecation.*

This (as Mr. *Bayle* obſerves) was very abſurd. For the effect of the imprecation was to be the ſudden death of the one or the other, and ſo neither of them could alter his opinion. The dead man could not do it, and the ſurvivor would not, ſince the terrible ſucceſs of his opponent's curſe would have given ſo authentick a teſtimony to the truth of his own religion. *But it muſt not be expected*, continues Monſieur *Bayle, that ſuch raving viſionairies ſhould be free from contradiction.*

He deluded abundance of silly people with this kind of prayer, and told them, that for the sins of men, the devil and his imps had, for two months together, inflicted on his body the very individual pains of hell, or within a small matter of them.

By thus swearing by his eternal damnation, and other execrable imprecations, he seduced *Coppinger* and *Arthington*, two men of moderate learning, and made them believe that he frequently conversed with God, and that the devil had stigmatized him. His frequent and most fervent prayers, and exterior appearance of great sanctity, and his custom of fasting every *Sunday*, conduced to the belief of these things. *Poor human soul!* (cries Mr. *Bayle* here) *how great are thy errors! And how great is their efficacy!*

Edmond Coppinger had the title of the *Prophet of mercy*, and *Henry Arthington* that of the *Prophet of judgment*. *Arthington* gave out that they had an extraordinary mission, and that, after *Jesus Christ*, *William Hacket* was the next in power. They afterwards went farther, and equalled *William Hacket* to our Saviour in all things. He himself said in his prayers, *Father, I know thou lovest me equal with thyself*. He refused the ceremony of unction or coronation, *for*, says he, *I have been already*

ready anointed by the Holy Ghoſt in heaven. At laſt, they aſked him, what he would command them to do, promiſing obedience without reſerve? *Go*, quoth he, *proclaim through all the ſtreets of* London, *that* Jeſus Chriſt *is come to judge the world, and lodges at ſuch an inn, and no body can put him to death.* They obeyed the prophet with ſuch precipitancy, that *Arthington* forgot his gloves. When by their bawling they had drawn a dirty croud about them, they mounted an empty chariot, and there preached up *William Hacket*, foretelling, that all who refuſed obedience to this king of *Europe*, ſhould kill one another, and that queen *Elizabeth* would be dethroned.

When they had thus executed this their important commiſſion, they returned again to their maſter, *William Hacket*: as ſoon as they ſaw him, *Arthington* cried out before the people, *behold the king of the earth.*

This fellow being at once an enthuſiaſt and a rebel, perfectly hated queen *Elizabeth*, and deſigned to have robbed her of her crown life, and to have changed the form of government. It was obſerved of him, that he always ſat down and put on his hat at the prayers which mentioned her majeſty.

He was at length ſentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and was executed accordingly. Dreadful are the blaſphemies which he uttered on that occaſion. One of them being at the end of a very devout prayer of his, Monſieur *Bayle* obſerves, *that there is nothing ſo extravagant, but the heart of man is capable of it.* In that prayer he calls himſelf the true *Jehovah*, whom God had ſent; and deſires the Almighty to ſhew ſome miracle from the clouds to theſe unbelievers, and deliver him from his enemies. *But if not*, ſays he to the Omnipotent, *I will ſet the heavens on fire, and* ——the other part of the threatning is ſo horrid and outrageous, that I cannot utter it otherwiſe than in Latin, *& te e throno detractum manibus meis lacerabo.* It is ſaid he pronounced other words ſtill more execrable.

When the hangman was going to do his duty, *Hacket* turned round upon him, and ſaid, *And doſt thou, beaſt, dare to hang* Hacket *thy king?* After the rope was tied about his neck, he caſt up his eyes to heaven, and grinding his teeth, *Is this*, ſays he, *the recompence thou giveſt me for making a king of thee? But I come to be revenged.*

Upon his tryal he behaved himſelf with great Aſſurance and an affected gravity. He confeſſed to the judges, that he had ſtabbed the

effigies

effigies of queen *Elizabeth* with an iron pin, and that he never owned her for queen. A little before he was hanged, he curſed her with all manner of execrations and bitterneſs.

Theſe are the ſhocking effects of enthuſiaſm. True devotion indeed has adorned the ſeveral countries of the world, with the nobleſt buildings. By this, temples, and other public places of worſhip have been erected to open the mind to vaſt conceptions, and to fit it to converſe with the divinity, that has promiſed to reſide in thoſe magnificent and ſtupendious fabricks: for, every thing that is majeſtick imprints an awfulneſs and reverence on the mind of the beholder, and ſtrikes in with the natural greatneſs of the ſoul, whoſe hopes are filled with immortality, and a joyful proſpect of future rewards promiſed to all thoſe, who live in a dutiful ſubmiſſion to all the doctrines of that religion, which the ſon of God has publiſhed to mankind. It is devotion, that calls upon us to ſettle accounts between our Mkera and our own ſouls, to cancel unrepented ſins, and to renew our contracts of obedience for the future. And it is devotion that has appointed ſtated times for particular acts of piety, or the exerciſe of certain religious duties in all civil governments, whatever deity they worſhipped, or whatever religion they eſtabliſhed: becauſe, that which may be done at all times, is often totally neglected and forgotten, unleſs

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fixed and determined to some time more than another; and therefore though several duties may be suitable to every day of our lives, they are most likely to be performed if some days are more particularly set apart to put them in practice. Which propensity of the mind to religious worship; the natural tendency of the soul in dangers and distresses, in sorrows and sickness, to fly to some superior Being, for help and relief; the gratitude to an invisible over-ruling power, which arises in us upon receiving any extraordinary and unexpected good fortune or deliverance; the acts of love and admiration, with which the thoughts of men are so wonderfully transported in meditating upon the divine perfections, and the universal concurrence of all nations in the great article of adoration, plainly shew that devotion or religious worship must be the effect of a tradition from some first founder of mankind, or that it is conformable to the natural light of sound reason, or that it proceeds from an instinct implanted in the human soul. But which ever of them shall be assigned as the principle of divine worship, it manifestly points to a supreme Being, as the first author, and only object thereof. Yet

Nothing is more certain than that this religious principle may sometimes lead us into enthusiasm and superstition, when it is not moderated

denated by that right and ſound reaſon, which God has implanted in us to be the guide of all our actions; and nothing is more common than to make it a cloke for knavery and perſecution. But a head turned with religious enthuſiaſm deſerves our greateſt pity; and when devotion does not lie under the check of reaſon, it is very apt to degenerate into enthuſiaſm. So that the mind, which finds herſelf very much enflamed with her devotions, is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up in her, by ſomething divine: and the ſoul that indulgeth this thought too far, and humours the growing paſſion, at laſt flings herſelf into imaginary raptures and extaſies; and then being once perſwaded that ſhe is under the influence of ſome divine impulſe, or directed by a much ſuperior guide; it is no wonder, if ſhe ſlights human ordinances, and refuſes to comply with any eſtabliſhed form of religion.

The perſon that is diſtracted, though it be only with pride, malice, or jealouſy, is a ſight very mortifying to human nature; but when the diſtemper ariſeth from any indiſcreet fervours of devotion, or too intence an application of the mind to its miſtaken duties, it deſerves our more particular compaſſion. Let us therefore be careful to keep our reaſon as cool as poſſible, and to guard ourſelves in all parts of

life

life againſt the influences of conſtitution, party paſſion, and imagination. Superſtition is the exceſs of religion in general, as well as of devotion in particular.

In religion, an enthuſiaſt is like an obſtinate clown, and a ſuperſtitious man, is like an inſipid courtier in converſation. Enthuſiaſm has ſomething in it of madneſs; ſuperſtition abounds with folly; as might be largely exemplified by the many crimes, that, under the pretence of religion, have been from time to time committed: thus as it has been well obſerved by good authors, ſuch particular ſhoes and ſlippers have been adopted by a gothick biſhop, perhaps, in the exercis of his eccleſiaſtick function; whoſe invention was improved by the addition of a mitre on the head, and a crooked ſtaff in the hand, under the pretence of greater decency in the performance of ſome part of public devotions; never ſtopping, till at laſt the prieſts, under a pretence of more aptly repreſenting ſuch and ſuch myſteries of our holy religion, decked themſelves like harlequins, and their places of worſhip like theatres; ſo that by degrees, the whole office degenerated into a gaudy and empty ſhow.

For, after once ſuch a liberty is permitted, every nation, age and ſect, perhaps, add other ceremonies

ceremonies, which they think more ſignificant, and which take poſſeſſion in the ſame manner, and are never to be driven out, after they have once been admitted, and gained the applauſe of the people, till they ſometimes quite deſtroy the ſpirit of devotion, and lead the people into flat idolatry. In a word, enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition are the weakneſſes of human reaſon, that expoſe us to the ſcorn and deriſion of infidels, and ſink us even below the brute creation. Therefore,

We have great reaſon to bleſs God, that this general form and out-ſide of religion is almoſt worn out among us: but there are ſtill many perſons, who, by a natural melancholy, or unchearfulneſs of heart, by miſtaken notions of piety, or by weakneſs of underſtanding, love to indulge this uncomfortable way of life, and give themſelves up a prey to melancholy and grief. The pleaſures of converſation, and all thoſe ſocial entertainments, which are not only innocent, but praiſe-worthy, are cut off by ſuperſtitious fears, and groundleſs ſcruples; as if mirth was made for reprobates, and chearfulneſs of heart was to be denied thoſe, who are the only perſons, that are capable of enjoying it without remorſe.

Many excellent perſons, who are weighed down by this habitual ſorrow of heart, rather

deſerve our compaſſion, than our reproaches. Is it not a pity to ſee a perſon, otherwiſe of a good underſtanding, think himſelf obliged in duty, to be diſconſolate and ſad? and to look on a fit of ſudden laughter, as a breach of his vow in baptiſm? or, ſtartle at an innocent jeſt, as if it were blaſphemy? if he hears that any one is advanced to a title of honour, he lifts up his hands and eyes; the deſcription of a public ceremony makes him ſhake his head; and he bleſſes himſelf at the ſight of a gay equipage; becauſe his reſerved conſtitution imagines, that all the little ornaments of life, are the pomps and vanities of a wicked world. And, conſequently, he pronounceth in groſs, that all mirth is wanton, and all wit is prophane; he is ſcandalized at youth for being lively, and at childhood for being full of play. He ſits like a mourner at a marriage-feaſt, or at a chriſtening; ſighs at the concluſion of a merry ſtory, and grows devout when the reſt of the company grow pleaſant and entertaining; through a miſtaken notion of religion and devotion. For,

The truly religious know, that it is not the buſineſs of virtue to extirpate, but to regulate the affections of the mind. Virtue will moderate and reſtrain; but it was never deſigned to baniſh gladneſs from the heart of man. Tho' religion contracts the circle of our pleaſures, yet

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ſhe leaves it wide enough for her votaries to expatiate in, to comfort and refreſh the ſoul.

The true ſpirit of Religion cheers, as well as compoſes the ſoul; it, indeed, baniſhed all levity of behaviour, all vicious and diſſolute mirth; but, in exchange, fills the mind with a perpetual ſerenity, uninterrupted chearfulneſs, and an habitual inclination, not only to be pleaſed in itſelf, but to pleaſe others alſo.

Having beſtowed a conſiderable time upon the wild and ſuperſtitious imagination of ſome enthuſiaſts, I propoſe to lay together ſome conſiderations upon the ſpleen, or vapours, which I am of opinion, is nearly allied to enthuſiaſm, or rather a compoſition of enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition.

All ſorts of people, when they are got together, will be finding ſomething to talk of. News, politicks, and ſtocks, compoſe the converſation of the buſy and trading world. Rakes and men of pleaſure fight duels with men they never ſpoke to, and lie with women they never ſaw, and do twenty other fine feats over their cups, which they never do any where elſe. And children, ſervants, and old women, and others of the ſame ſize of underſtanding, pleaſe and terrify themſelves and one another with

ſpirits and *goblins*. In this caſe a *ghoſt* is no more than a help to diſcourſe.

When the fancy is overheated with theſe romantic relations, it is no wonder that it retains them, and preſents ſuch terrible images in dreams. It is odd that people ſhould love to be frightened, and yet there are perſons who take pains when they are awake, to alarm themſelves when they are aſleep.

But indeed it is very rare that any of thoſe quick-ſighted folks, who ſee inviſible ſpirits in their dreams, think fit to have been aſleep at the time. For, ſhould they own it to have been a dream, the *ſpirit* would loſe the reputation of a *ſpirit*, and they the credit of ſtealing a look at it. And therfore, whenever they have the dreadful good fortune to dream of an apparition, you muſt be ſure to believe they were wide awake.

This ſort of civility I lately paid to a faſhionable young lady, who is troubled with the ſpleen, and favoured with the ſight of an *apparition*, as often as ſhe pleaſes. She told me ſhe *ſaw a horrid ugly ſpectre*, ſtanding bolt upright againſt the wainſcot, one night as ſhe lay a-bed without the *leaſt glimmering of light* in the room; its eyes were ſunk, its countenance wan and meagre, and its aſpect threatening; ſhe added,

ded, *it looked earneſtly at her, and beckoned with its finger*, *Madam*, ſays I, *are you certain you were awake?* certain, ſays ſhe! what a ſimple queſtion there is! my eyes were wide open, *And pray*, Madam, *had you the courage to look at it?* She anſwered, ſhe never looked at it, for ſhe buried her head under the bed-cloaths, but ſhe was ſure it was in the room. And I was ſo very courteous as to take her word, that ſhe had ſeen what ſhe never looked at.

That *fear firſt made gods*, is certainly very true, when the Almighty is excepted; and that fear made *ghoſts*, ſeems to be true without exception. Nothing is more natural to the mind of man, than ſuperſtition and religious horror, which ſees every thing double, and raiſes ſubſtances from non-entities. How often does our imagination run away with us into the inviſible world, and there create objects, and preſent us with forms and phantoms as frightful as they are irrational.

We muſt be ſtrangely delighted with ghoſts and chimeras, when we take a tour out of nature to ſee them; and ſo fond are we of their company, that we frequently make them return us the viſit in our homes and bed-chambers.

When it is thus in our power to be haunted with ſpirits of *our own creating*, I am ſurpriſed

priſed we do not make our *ghoſts* of a more amiable aſpect and nature, and not of that hideous hue and quality as always to frighten us, as they do, out of our wits. But the fancy is in this caſe partial to itſelf; it loves to be ſhocked with things terrible, which leave a ſtrong and amazing idea behind them.

It may look like an affront to our reaſon, not to be conſulted in *theſe fairy matters*; but as it has been for many ages a laudable maxim among us, *that reaſon has no manner of right or title to meddle in ſpiritual affairs*, we are generouſly left to be deluded by our *unerring imaginations*, and *to be mad by the authority of religion*.

Nothing weakens the mind and turns the brain more, than the deluſive horrors which the common ſtories of *dæmons* and *goblins* bring along with them. He that is the ſtaunchest believer in this point, is often the moſt wretched infidel in articles of the higheſt and moſt uſeful nature. He ſwallows glibly the groſſeſt falſhoods and forgeries, but cannot bear the appearance of truth and conviction. If you tell him that a *ſpirit* carried away the ſide of a houſe, or played at foot-ball with half a dozen chairs and as many pewter-diſhes, you win his heart and his aſſent; but if you go about to perſuade him that a bodily communication between the inviſible

inviſible ſpirits of the other world, and the mortal inhabitants of this, is not very likely, at leaſt very common, he holds up both his hands and wonders how you can be ſo great an atheiſt. Such a one is ſo long accuſtomed to be cheated by others and himſelf, that at length nothing but deluſion will go down with him, and he has no reliſh of what is not monſtrous and oppoſite to nature and probability.

How infinite and prevalent is error, and yet upon what ſlight and ſhameful foundations does it ſtand; this conſideration alone ſhews the lamentable weakneſs of human nature, and its backwardneſs to countenance reaſon, and receive information. If we would be brought but to receive nothing as a principle which is not ſupported by the evidence of truth, of which every man is a judge, when he is not debauched by trick and ſophiſtry, error, which ſtands but upon conjecture and folly, would vaniſh and be loſt.

I cannot but think it an honeſt endeavour, and a good office done to mankind, to expoſe *popular lies*, eſpecially ſuch as vitiate the underſtanding, and render reaſonable creatures leſs wiſe or leſs ſober. Superſtition and credulity may appear innocent and impotent; but they

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are *quite different things*; nothing is more powerful, nothing is more formidable. They have held the world in fetters and ignorance in all ages, and they are uſeful and important tools in the hands of deſigning men. If I can bring a perſon to *believe* what I pleaſe, by the ſame art and authority I can bring him to *act* what I pleaſe, witneſs this horrible affair of *Damien*; and if I can make him but ſufficiently credulous, I'll undertake likewiſe to make him ſufficiently cruel.

We ought therefore to be very wary what we believe, ſince we cannot tell what miſchievous conſequences ſuch our eaſineſs may produce. We have a right to examine all things, and a rule to do it by and I cannot conceive why we take the moſt improbable ſtories upon truſt, and, in other inſtances, refuſe the cleareſt demonſtrations.

There is indeed a principle which always will make the world uneaſy, and which in ſpite of its general prevalence, I would fain have blotted out of human nature; every reader will conſent to the thing, when I tell him it is prejudice; and yet, perhaps, from unknown ſeeds, in his own mind be guilty of it the next moment. In order, therefore, to do juſtice to a ſubject that ſo well deſerves the conſideration of mankind, I ſhall take the liberty to tell what pre-

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judice is, and what fatal influences it muſt have on themſelves and the ſociety, that by the eſtabliſhed rules of common ſenſe claims a right in them.

Prejudice is that habitual notion of things and perſons that a man receives from the information of *others*: it is early ingrafted in the mind, and the laſt to be got rid of. It is the ſenſe of a *ſecond Perſon* which a man makes uſe of for his own, and is led into the fatal miſtake of believing *that* the effect of his judgment which came to him another way. *Prejudice*, from what quarter ſoever it is brought, has the ſame direction and government of the underſtanding: A *nurſe* or a *prieſt*, an old *woman* or a *prophet*, may be the cauſe, but the effect will ſtill be the ſame. The exertion of this *no-principle* will produce equally terrible or equally calm actions of life; and a man ſhall reckon it either his duty to *ſit ſtill* or *murder*, juſt as any young imbibed opinion directs him. The unhappineſs is, that it keeps pace with life itſelf, mixes itſelf with every circumſtance of his doing well or ill, and bears the face of ſomething better in the eyes of the world. One man calls it *religion* another *principle*; and he who dares to own it by a plainer name, ſays it is *party*. Thus, whatever is done upon this foundation, though never ſo faulty, ſhall find advocates, becauſe it meets

with ſome ſimilitude of action in your neighbour, and that is reaſon enough for his approving it.

But if a little regard to ones ſelf and acquaintance, will not be ſtrong enough to alter this unnatural conceit of *deceiving* and being *deceived*, I would deſire them to look at the conſequences, which are no leſs than the worſt part of the evils that afflict mankind: I ſuppoſe it will be owned, that the general good and peace is what ought to be moſt in the view of every individual: yet let but this unhappy word *prejudice* abroad, and it will ſet mankind a cutting one another's throats, make us kill by *law* and juſtify by *precedent*.

The *Pope* for inſtance, for a ſmall tincture in his education, takes it into his head, that he is the *common father* of the univerſe, *ſupream upon earth*, and has I don't know how many kingdoms (beſides reverſions) to diſpoſe of——Upon this *prejudice*, he gives the dominions of one *prince* to another, and tells him he is *heavenly-entitled* to do in his name as much violence, oppreſſion and fraud as he pleaſes. This certainly, has been done—— but why? the man of infallibility firſt *miſtakes himſelf*, and then imagines that the reſt of the world are of his opinion. No doubt it is a very comfortable thing to have this power fairly

inveſted

inveſted in any one perſon; but ſurely it is an affront to the dignity of our nature, to be made the inſtruments of it; and if God Almighty did not deſign the ſcheme ſo, in what a miſerable *prejudiced* ſervitude muſt thoſe wretches live, who will ſo forfeit their lives and hazard their ſalvation, to maintain the truth of all this?

The honeſt followers of *Mahomet*, are juſt of the ſame opinion, thinking they have full as much or more right to *Rome* than his *Holineſs* has to *Conſtantinople*; and if there was any occaſion given, would ſacrifice as many *bigotted* lives, on their ſide, as could be raiſed in *Chriſtendom*.

In the ſtrength of this, would twenty thouſand *Spahis*, and fifty thouſand *Janizaries*, march forth at a minute's warning, with only this comfort, that their friend *Mahomet* is on their ſide, who once had a familiar *pidgeon* at his beck, and has promiſed them the fineſt women that can be had, if they happen to be knock'd on the head for believing in him. We, who are certainly in the right, call this *prejudice*; but can we think they have not a better, more ſanctified name for it in the *Eaſt*?

I have been ſo prolix in relating the particulars of the life, tortures, and execution of this aſſaſſin, and my reflections upon enthuſiaſm, that my ſheet of [illegible] is pretty much crowded; there-

therefore excuſe my telling you ſo ſoon, that, I am, with love and compliments, as due, to all friends and relations,

Your affectionate Brother,

PARIS, 29 March, 1757.

J. W.

P. S. I forgot to obſerve, that about ten o' Clock in the morning of the 28th of *March*, the day of the execution of *Damien*, his father and two brothers were brought before him, and afterwards his wife and daughter: he was exceedingly diſturbed and confuſed at the approach of his wife and daughter, but not in the leaſt affected at the ſight of his father and his brothers.

FINIS.